## OLD CALIFORNIA MISSIONS.

### Junipero Serra's Work

To appreiate fully the life-work of Padre Junipero Serra, which the centenary celebration at the old mission of San Carlos de Monterey commemorates, one must visit the places in whice he labored and see the natural obstacles which his genius and enthusiasm overcame. His story is virtually the story of the founding of the Franciscan missions in California—a narrative of hardship and privation suffered for the cause of religion, unsurpassed in the history of the Catholic Church. No one can write other than a colorless narrative of his career who has failed to see this California coast country in the desolate dry season.

EARLY TRIALS OF THE FATHERS.

To this wild country inhabited only by scattered tribes of Indians, came the Padre Junipero Serra and a small body of his followers from Mexico. They had been sent by the Franciscans to take possession of the country from which an imperial edict had ejected the Jesuits. Serra had had a hard noviciate in Mexico, preaching and founding missions for nearly twenty years. He was in the prime of life; full of enthusiasm for the salvation of the souls of the heathen; full too, of that simple unquestioning faith which has almost ceased to exist in any church to-day; a man of iron will and dogged obstinacy, so carried away by the fervor of the missionary spirit that hunger, thirst and bodily weakness had no power to turn himfrom his great purpose of evangelizing the California Indians. Palou, one of his associates, who has left about the only trustworthy materials for a biography, records the rapture of Serra when he was able to baptize an Indian child, and thus save a soul from perdition. Upon such a nature discouragement and hardship simply served as a stimulus to new exertion. The story of the first trip from Mexico, vids like the account of the exploration of a savage land, so barren was the country, so destitute of water, so overgrown with the giant cactus which in many places grew so thick that a roadway had to be hewed through it. After nearly two months of hardships, the band reached San Diego and founded there the first of the Franciscan missions, on July 16, 1769. No sooner was this mission established—and the establishment consisted of nothing more than the consecration of a bit of ground enclosed by a rude brush fence, where mass could be said, and the erection of the cross—no sooner was this done than a party of these eager proselyters set out for Monterey to found a mission on the beautiful bay which Viscayno had discovered nearly two centuries before. They made their toilsome way up along the barren coast, receiving many presents of acorns from the Indians. They passed by the object of their search, toiled over leagues of sand and made their way through miles of chaparral, until at last they reached the bay of San Francisco. It was only on a second expedition that Monterey was found. Then the land and sea expeditions united in the consecration of the spot, and a huge cross was put up on the shore, which has been renewed with pious care and still marks the place. June 3, 1770, is the date of the erection of this cross—the sign of the permanent foothold of the Franciscans on the coast.

RAPID GROWTH OF THE MISSIONS.

The years that followed until Serra's death in 1781, were years of constant work in founding new missions, of frequent conflicts with the military authorities, and of no small perplexities in keeping under control the large bodies of Indian neophytes at the different missions. So much work was needed to develop the new stations that no effort could be spared for church-building, which afterward became one of the chief ambitions of the Fathers. After starting a mission, the Indians were instructed in the raising of grain, means of irrigation were devised, fruit-trees were planted, and temporary structures for residence and worship were erected. The pioneer labor was very heavy and in this rough work Father Serra, who was made President of the missions, took a hand, not disdaining to make adobe with the Indians, or to clear away the chaparral for the crops. Before his death nine missions were founded, as follows: San Diego Monterey, San Antonio de Padua, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Clara, San Bonaventura. With two exceptions these missions now mark the site of cities and large towns, and give to the geography of California the sonorous Spanish element so pleasing in comparison with the rude Indian names of Oregon and Washington Territory or the profane titles bestowed by the early miner and adventurer. Of all these missions, that established on the banks of the Carmel river, four miles from Monterey was the favorite of Padre Serra. That he made his headquarters and to that he returned after his periodical visits to the sister missions which so often needed his aid and counsel. There was no fine church then; only a rude chapel. The eyes of Serra never saw the many beautiful churches in which the devotion of the Franciscans incarnated. He died at the Carmel mission, August 28, 1781, and his funeral was the scene of great lamentation among the Indians who regarded him as a father.

CHARACTER OF PADRE SERRA.

Of Serra's character there have been various estimates, but nearly all the historians have agreed in awarding him the seal of a Loyola without his cruelty. The world to him was a battlefield; he walked among types of evil and of good, like Banyan's Pilgrim; even his ordinary business letters are curiously interlarded with scraps of exhortation and appeals for divine guidance. Though of slight frame, and suffering much from bodily weakness, he never failed to conduct the long service of the church, and in his sermons it was his practice to beat his breast with a stone in order to impress his hearers with the sufferings which awaited the incorpentant in the world to come. He suffered greatly also from a sore leg which he allowed to go without healing, accepting it, with the false monastic idea of that age, as a cross which was put upon him. The records of the time show that he enjoyed the sweets of power, and while very tender and considerate of the converts, he could be harsh and dictatorial with the military, whom he regarded as intruders upon his territory. His dream was to organize all the missions on the coast under one spiritual head, and to have no secular interference. The fair new territory he held had been earned by the Franciscans, and to them it should be given to rule as the Jesuits had ruled in Mexico a century before. Hence he curbed the power of the military whenever it was practicable, and aroused that strong spirit of antagonism to the missions which bore fruit in later years in their rapid decline and final ruin. He was a severe disciplinarian, and expected of priests, neophytes and Indian converts the same passionate devotion to religion which he showed in his every day life. There are many stories of his severity in enforcing discipline, and in compelling the converts to labor, but those who have had any experience with the California Indians will not judge him harshly. Naturally averse, like any savage people to continued effort, Serra and his associates thought them the arts of building and agriculture. The Indians were assured of a good living, even in the long dry season, their improvidence was kept in check; they were not allowed to gamble away the earnings of a month in a single night, they had a home from which they could not be ejected at the fancy of the white intruder; the rich ceremonial of the Roman Catholic service appealed to their imagination, and they were very fond of the festas and other diversions with which the fathers skillfully relieved the routine of work and devotion. Hence it is no wonder that some of the aged Indians who may now be found in Southern California mourn over the decay of the missions and speak of the days when the Franciscans ruled the coast as of the Golden Age of their people.

WHAT LED TO DECAY.

The history of the missions after Serra's death may be condensed into a paragraph. For twenty years the missions grew with great rapidity. By 1801 nineteen missions in all were established, in which were gathered 20,000 Indians. The Indians formed villages about the mission buildings. They were allotted land, but unfortunately for them, they received no grant of this land, nothing by which they could prove ownership, or any legal title to the improvements which represented the hard labor of years. The feeling against the Fathers was growing in intensity. The Spanish civil and military authorities looked lustfully upon those leagues of fine estates. They circulated charges of cruelty against the priests in flogging Indians. They poisoned the minds of the home Government with suspicion of undue ambition of the mission Fathers to erect an ecclesiastical kingdom in far off California in which the worst features of Jesuit rule should be perpetuated. The year 1834 saw the missions secularized and placed under control of the civil authorities. This of course, in a Spanish country, ruled by men sent out by the central government, meant spoliation and speedy ruin. The Governor was authorized to levy on the missions for his needs as upon any other State property.

THE WORK OF SPOILATION.

Thus in ten years the valuable herds which had been accumulated under the care of the Franciscans dwindled away, a large part of them slaughtered for the hides and tallow: the Indians who at the time of the edict of secularization were estimated to number 20,000 in a single decade were reduced to 6,000. The others retreated to their mountain homes and resumed the precarious life from which the priests had rescued them. A few priests still cling to their old homes, but the heart was gone from their work. The buildings were allowed to fall into decay, the fields were tilled only by a small body of Indians, all the system which wrought such wonders in the previous half century was lost. Finally in March, 1846, under the corrupt rule of Governor Pio Pico, the mission property was declared liable to bankruptcy. Pico sold many valuable tracts for a song; leagues of rich land he gave away to his friends; right and left he scattered the accumulations of the Fathers in the few months which remained before the occupation of the country by the United States Government. He not only ruthlessly despoiled the missions, but he left a legacy of litigation over false titles which has been one of the curses of the State. After the missions had been stripped of nearly all their lands and herds, a decision was passed by the United States Land Commissioner, restoring the church buildings and the remnants of land to the Catholic Church. But they are now only sad reminders of their former wealth and glory; the churches in ruin and decay and the lands worked by some humble retainers of the once powerful mission.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

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Toward the close of summer in New York State the minister passed one of his people cleaning corn. "Oh, Mr. Johnson," said he "a fine, dry day for corn." "Yes, parson, but death on the wheat." Next day it was raining, and the minister drove by. "Splendid day for wheat, Mr. Johnson." "Ah, yes," with a groan, "but death on the corn!"

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The Order of the Black Eagle of Prussia, recently bestowed upon the Heir-Apparent to the Russian Crown, has, since its foundation in 1701, been given to five women, namely, the Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine of Russia, the Duchess Augusta of Wurtemberg, the Dowager Queen Elizabeth of Prussia, and the present Empress Queen Augusta.

### The English Prince at Heidelberg

It may be well here at once to contradict the absurd statements which have of late appeared in one or two of my contemporaries, relative to the mode of life Prince Edward would adopt during his stay at Heidelberg. Far from going there to live in great style, and to delight the German shopkeepers with lavish expenditure, the Prince went for study and health and recreation, and his august parents very wisely sent him to the house of a simple German professor, where he could obtain all these advantages without being tempted to ape the doings of the grand lady of Austria. The English people will certainly much more appreciate the wise course the Prince of Wales is pursuing with regard to his son's education than sympathize with the greedy shop-keepers of Heidelberg, who feel disappointed at their golden dreams having failed to become life.

### The Kaiser's Country Home.

The Emperor of Germany is now residing at Babelsberg, his favorite country house, where he will remain till September 10, when he goes to the Rhine provinces for the autumn manœuvres. Babelsberg, which is not a large house, is in the modern castle style so common in Germany, and was built about forty years ago. The rooms are comparatively small, and are simply but most comfortably furnished. They are hung with portraits of the Hohenzollen family and their royal relatives. There are very fine pictures of the Queen and the Prince Consort and the late Czar Nicholas. One room is hung with landscapes by the Crown Princess. The grounds of Babelsberg are by far the most picturesque of all the numerous Royal residences about Potsdam. They were laid out under the superintendence of Prince Pückler-Muskau (the original of Mrs. Lee Hunter's friend, Count Smorltork,) and slope to the Havel, which here forms a broad lake. The adjoining domain of Gleinicke is the summer residence of Prince Frederick Charles.